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JOHN ELIOT SQUARE

II
Roxbury
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Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE: Massachusetts
COUNTY: Suffolk
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER | DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: John Eliot Square
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION 9th Congressional District

STREET AND NUMBER: John Eliot Square
CITY OR TOWN: Roxbury

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts	025	Suffolk	025

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
[X] District [ ] Building	[ ] Public	Public Acquisition:	[X] Occupied	Yes:
[ ] Site [ ] Structure	[ ] Private	[ ] In Process	[X] Unoccupied	[X] Restricted
[ ] Object	[X] Both	[ ] Being Considered	[ ] Preservation work in progress	[ ] Unrestricted
				[ ] No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

[ ] Agricultural	[ ] Government	[ ] Park	[ ] Transportation	[ ] Comments
[ ] Commercial	[ ] Industrial	[X] Private Residence	[X] Other (Specify) Library	
[X] Educational	[ ] Military	[X] Religious		
[ ] Entertainment	[ ] Museum	[ ] Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: public and private
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Roxbury
STATE: Massachusetts
CODE: 025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Registry of Deeds
STREET AND NUMBER: Suffolk County Courthouse & Norfolk County Courthouse
CITY OR TOWN: Boston & Dedham
STATE: Massachusetts
CODE: 025

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: 1) Historic American Buildings Survey Mass-558,-557
DATE OF SURVEY: 1939 [X] Federal [ ] State [ ] County [ ] Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Washington
STATE: D. C.
CODE:

STATE: Massachusetts
COUNTY: Suffolk
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	[X] Excellent	[X] Good	[X] Fair	[X] Deteriorated	[ ] Ruins	[ ] Unexposed
	(Check One)		(Check One)			
	[ ] Altered	[X] Unaltered	[ ] Moved	[X] Original Site		

OESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

John Eliot Square is a triangular shaped district which includes nineteen buildings of which two are major historic buildings and seven are supporting historic structures. They form a unique mixture of building styles from the mid-eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries. The area includes 183 to 149 Roxbury Street, 13 to 25 Putnam including Dudley Elementary School, 3 to 27 Dudley Street, 1 to 20 John Eliot Square, and 58 to 70 Bartlett Street, and the First Church and its grounds.

Major Structures

1. The First Church in Roxbury (1804) is an outstanding example of the Federal Meetinghouse style. The frame two-story church is five bays wide by seven bays deep with a projecting three bay entrance vestibule from which the tower springs. On the entrance, roundheaded side entries and upper story windows flank the central entry surmounted by an elliptical fanlight and upper story Palladian window. Four flush pilasters on the facade spring from rusticated pilasters on the ground floor and support a large triangular pediment. Modillion blocks ornament the cornice of the entire building as well as the pediments. Quoins outline the corners of the rectangular church proper; the windows are framed in plain wooden mouldings. The tower is composed of two square sections, the upper one with louvered penetrations for the belfry, an arcaded octagonal lantern, and a topmost octagonal cupola. The church is set on the rise at the rear of the triangular landscaped grounds.

The present structure remains unchanged from the original except that the steeple was rebuilt in 1954 after its destruction by a hurricane.

2. The Dillaway-Thomas House (c. 1750-54), 183 Roxbury St., is a two and a half story gambrel roof clapboard structure of typical modest Georgian style arrangement. Five bays wide and two bays deep, it has an entrance covered by a small rectangular portico supported on slender doric columns. Three pedimented dormers pierce the roof. A small one story enclosed entry projects in the center of the west side. The house is set back a considerable distance from the street.

A one story ell has been added to the rear of the house. A renovation effort in the 1930's completed interior renovations. Recently, a fire destroyed the roof.

Supporting Structures

3. Ionic Hall (1800-04), 149 Roxbury Street, a three story Federal brick mansion with a pitched roof and side gables, has a five bay facade with a central portico supported on Ionic columns. A delicately carved Federal cornice with complete return is under the roof which has two front dormers. The house is approached through a granite and puddingstone front wall that is topped by a small wrought-iron fence.

In 1874, the third story supposedly was added. Later additions include the one story wings on either side, the right one leading to a separate brick chapel on the grounds.

4. Dudley School Putnam and Dudley Streets, (c. 1873-84), a two story brick schoolhouse with a high mansard roof and peaked dormers. The massive structure has side entrance pavillions on the Dudley St. facade and an ornamental center gable. Brownstone belt courses and arched lintels, detailed brick cornice, and decorative slate roof are typical of the High Victorian Gothic style treatment.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian
- ☐ 15th Century
- ☐ 16th Century
- ☐ 17th Century
- ☒ 18th Century
- ☒ 19th Century
- ☐ 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1750-1873

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Aboriginal
- ☐ Prehistoric
- ☐ Historic
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☒ Architecture
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Commerce
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Conservation
- ☒ Education
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Industry
- ☐ Invention
- ☐ Landscape Architecture
- ☐ Literature
- ☒ Military
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Political
- ☒ Religion/Philosophy
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Sculpture
- ☒ Social/Humanitarian
- ☐ Theater
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Urban Planning
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings enclosing John Eliot Square, at the fork of three Roxbury streets, represent a mixture of architectural styles and mixture of residential, religious, civic, and commercial uses. Historically, Eliot Square has been the center of Roxbury since the town's founding in 1630. The growing settlement formed the parish of The First Church in Roxbury, which has occupied five successive structures on the same site. Chosen as the first minister of the new church, John Eliot, whose name has long been associated with the Square, gained the sobriquet, "Apostle of the Indians," for his efforts in educating local Indian tribes.

The only road to Boston from the inland towns forked at Eliot Square and lead to Cambridge (via Roxbury Street) and to Dedham (via Centre Street). The community developed along these highways with the First Church meetinghouse as a visual focal point. Beyond the Square toward Dudley Square were the original sites of the Roxbury Latin School, founded in 1645 and the oldest educational institution in America in continuous existence. During the Revolution, the slopes of the Roxbury Highlands, south of the Square, hid patriot troops; at the crest of the hill was Roxbury High Fort. As the 19th century progressed, the Highlands developed from large colonial estates and farmlands into a fashionable residential suburb.

The Dillaway-Thomas House, built between 1750 and 1754 by the Reverend Oliver Peabody, pastor of the First Church, was probably not completed by 1762 during the ministry of Peabody's successor, Amos Adams. During the siege of Boston, General John Thomas probably used the house as headquarters of the Continental Army. The rear windows could afford a reasonable view of The Neck and beyond to Charlestown. The house remained informally the parsonage of the Church until 1833, when nieces of the late minister inherited the property. Nonetheless, the new occupants, one of the nieces and her husband, Charles K. Dillaway, were active in church affairs: Dillaway, a teacher at Boston Latin and trustee of Roxbury Latin, was a Deacon and Superintendent of the Sunday School. Between the end of the Dillaway's occupancy in 1903 until 1927, no noteworthy events occurred. In 1927, the house was bought by the City of Boston for land for a new school. The acquisition caused local residents to oppose its demolition. The City responded by funding partial restoration, and the Roxbury Historical Society has maintained it as headquarters.

The site of the First Church (1.) has been continuously used since erection of the first building in 1632 by the congregational parish. John Eliot has been one of its most remarkable ministers. Each of the earlier structures

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Memorial History of Boston, 1630-1880, ed. J. Windsor, Boston, 1881.

Drake, Frances S., The Town of Roxbury: Its Memorable Persons and Places, Roxbury, 1878

Thwing, W. E., History of the First Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, Boston, 1908.

Amadon, E. R., Historical Report: Dillaway House, unpublished report for the City of Boston, Public Facilities Department by Architectural Heritage, Inc., March, 1969

Boston Evening Transcript, December 16, 1876.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY						OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE				LATITUDE			LONGITUDE	
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	42	19	51.04	71	05	31.25		°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	42	19	51.04	71	05	19.35							
SE	42	19	42.80	71	05	19.35							
SW	42	19	42.80	71	05	31.25							

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 9.5

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Judith McDonough

ORGANIZATION
Boston Landmarks Commission

DATE
March, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
Boston Redevelopment Authority

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

STATE
Massachusetts

CODE
25

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

_____
Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6. Existing Surveys cont'd.
2) Roxbury Highlands Study
Date of Survey: 1969 X Local
Depository for Survey Records: Boston Architectural Center
Newbury Street
Boston, Massachusetts Code: 25

7. Description cont'd.

5. Cox Building (c. 1870), 1, 2, 3, John Eliot Sq., 67, 69, 73 Bartlett St., 3, 5 Dudley Street, is an unusual curved block of three stories plus a mansard roof penetrated by windows. The central curved bays facing the Square is brick with granite sills, lintels, and quoins in the upper floors. On the matched flanking bays on Bartlett and Dudley Streets, brownstone is used for the entire facade as well as for ornamentation. Bracketed triangular pediments top the first floor openings; flat carved brownstone lintels decorate the upper windows. A bracketed cornice runs along the block's entire facade.

The first floor of the brick portion has been completely remodeled with glazed storefront windows; none of the block's original windows remain.

6. Spooner-Lambert House (c. 1780), 64 Lambert Street. This two story frame house with a hipped roof retains its Federal shape and window and chimney arrangement. An entrance portico with Ionic columns, the gabled side ell, and asphalt shingle wall covering indicate later additions.

7. Hotel Eliot (1875), 68-70 Bartlett Street, built of brick, this four story flat roofed structure presents an asymetrical facade and has richly ornamented surface treatment. Brownstone string courses connect sills and lintels leaving the interstices filled with patterned horizontal brickwork. A corbelled brick cornice tops the building. Generally, windows are elongated rectangles except for pairs of round-headed windows separated by colonnettes on the top story.

8. Marcus Garvey House (c. 1870), 20 John Eliot Square, is a massive five story brick building ornamented by brick corner quoins, string courses, and, under the cornice, a corbelled course which incorporates the round-headed top story windows. Flush oblong lintels of mastic finish the other windows. Above the central entrance in the third story, windows are recessed in three shallow brick arches and are connected by an iron balustrade.

The ground floor of the facade has been altered, and the original name plate has been removed from the top floor although its brick frame remains.

9. Putnam Chapel (1876), First Church grounds, is a one story frame building set on a high puddingstone basement.

8. Significance cont'd.

served as meetinghouse of the growing Roxbury community. During the siege the fourth church building was used as a signal station. This structure was replaced by the present edifice in 1803-04, although a contemporary manuscript states that "It was not half worn out . . . ." Soon after completion, in 1805, the parish voted to end town meetings in the church which necessitated construction of a new Town House (presently the site of the Dudley School). In 1806 a clock, reputedly made by Simon Willard, was set in the tower. Names of the church's architects, Timothy Palmer and a consultant, William Blaney, are only conjecture. About 1810, the parish became Unitarian, and the former occupants later formed the Eliot Congregational Church. Although the structure underwent several repairs during the 19th century, it remains the oldest frame church building in the city and is an outstanding example of the Federal meetinghouse style.

During the construction of the First Church, the First Religious Society held services in an adjacent home, Ionic Hall(3.), which was built in 1800 but was not completely finished until 1804. Captain Stoddard of Hingham built it for his daughter. The third story allegedly was added during the ownership of Mr. Theodore Otis in 1874. At present the handsome Federal mansion is owned by St. James Episcopal Church for use as residence and office.

The Dudley School (4.) was probably erected by 1873 only five years after Roxbury's annexation to Boston--a move that terminated need for the Old Town House on that site. Architecturally, the school illustrates the High Victorian Gothic style that was a popular fashion for schoolhouses of the 1870's.

Providing a visual terminus at the fork of Dudley and Bartlett Streets, the Cox Building (5.) echoes the curve of the First Church grounds and links the more massive later Victorian structures around Eliot Square. Built in 1870 by George Cox, the building facades were stipulated by deed to be of fireproof material. The central block originally combined residential and retail uses, while the flanking bays were elegant townhouses.

The Spooner-Lambert House (6.) was built soon after the Revolution ended by Major John J. Spooner, a Boston merchant. Although obscured by later additions, the characteristics of a modest early Federal dwelling are evident.

The Hotel Eliot (7.), built in 1875 from designs by the architect J. H. Besarick, became Roxbury's first, grand apartment house and indicated the trend of multiple-family housing that in later decades became more modest triple-deckers.

Formerly the Norfolk House, the Marcus Garvey House (8.) is a combination of structures which were originally used for hotel purposes witnessing Roxbury as an important route on the inland transportation system. The rear portion was added in 1825 to the original frame hostelry that was demolished in 1853 for the present massive building. Used as a settlement house after its demise as a hotel near the turn of the century, the building now honors Marcus Garvey, a prominent Black publisher and nationalist of the early 20th century and still provides community services to its neighborhood. Visually, the house provides a strong sense of enclosure to Eliot Square.

Putnam Chapel (9.), now repository of the old Fellowes Atheneum, was built in 1876. Its horizontal mass and exposed frame construction relate well to the church proper.

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

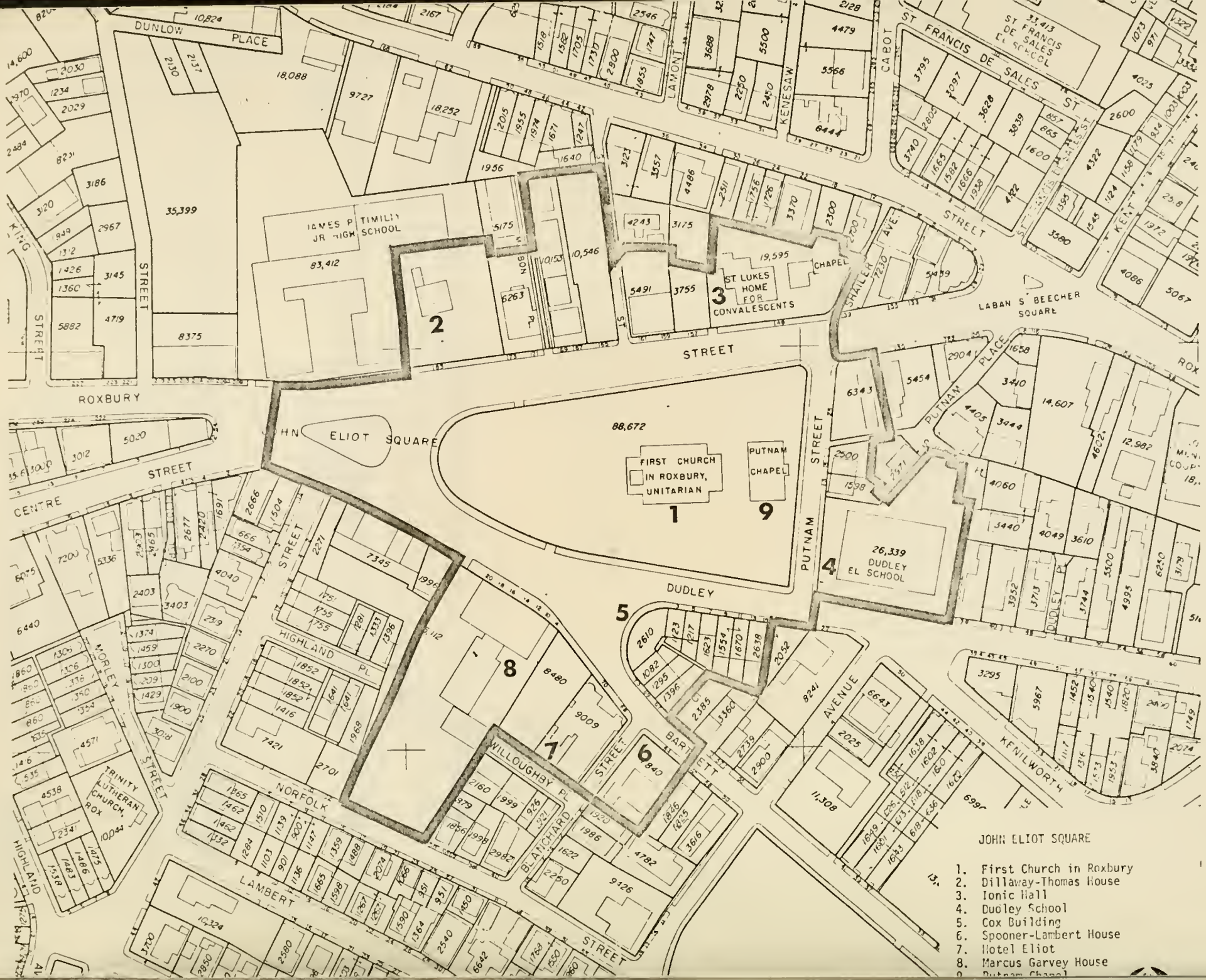
STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References cont'd.

The Roxbury Magazine, published by All Souls Unitarian Church, Roxbury, Massachusetts, 1899.

American Architect and Building News, vol. 2, no. 55, January 13, 1877.



JOHN ELIOT SQUARE

1. First Church in Roxbury
2. Dillaway-Thomas House
3. Ionic Hall
4. Dudley School
5. Cox Building
6. Spooner-Lambert House
7. Hotel Eliot
8. Marcus Garvey House
9. Putnam Chapel

Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: John Eliot Square, Roxbury

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Roxbury

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts	025	Suffolk	025

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: Topographic & Planimetric Survey of the City of Boston

SCALE: 1:100

DATE: 1962

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property broundories where required.
2. North orrow.
3. Lotitude ond longitude reference.

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STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Roxbury

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts	025	Suffolk	025

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Series, Boston South Quadrangle

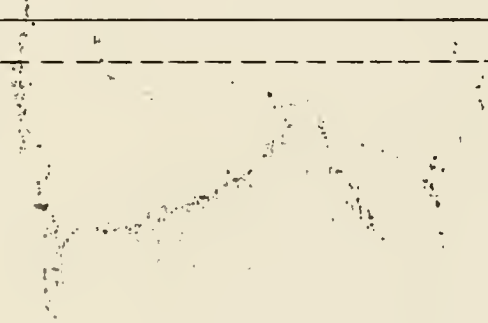
SCALE: 1:24,000

DATE: 1956

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS:

1. Property broundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.



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